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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 CONAKRY 000670

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [ELAB](#) [PREL](#) [GV](#)  
SUBJECT: CIVIL UNREST CONTINUES IN CONAKRY

REF: A. CONAKRY 0663  
[1](#)B. CONAKRY 0668

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Although the night was relatively quiet in Conakry, protestors and security forces were already mobilizing at 0700 for renewed demonstrations at key traffic intersections throughout the city. Embassy continues to receive reports of protest activity, including tire burning, road blocks, and gunfire. Police and gendarmes are responding to the situation, and the military remain confined to their barracks. The GoG does not appear to have coordinated a response, essentially delegating crisis management responsibilities to the new Minister of Security. Available information suggests that these protests are random and spontaneous, but the continued lack of security may encourage other groups to take advantage of the civil disorder to advance their own agendas. END SUMMARY.

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PROTESTORS DESTROY LOCAL POLICE COMMISSARIAT  
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[1](#)2. (SBU) During yesterday's demonstrations (reftels), police reportedly arrested about 50 protestors and detained them at a local police commissariat in Cosa. Youths in the area banded together and attacked the commissariat, breaking down the doors to release the detainees. They then completely destroyed the building. A new, reportedly unarmed police recruit was inadvertently killed during the melee. (COMMENT. This death is likely the same one reported yesterday in reftel B. END COMMENT).

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RELATIVE CALM THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT  
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[1](#)3. (SBU) The situation in Conakry was relatively calm overnight after a day of sporadic demonstrations across the city. LES staff reported hearing gunfire throughout the night, although there were no reports of large gatherings or other demonstrations. Embassy employees driving home yesterday evening saw evidence of rock throwing and tire burning, as well as broken glass and road blockages. Groups of youths were sitting by the roadside. Market stalls along the Bambeto traffic circle had been completely destroyed. Government officials went on national radio last night, encouraging citizens to remain calm and join together in peace. The Minister of Education was on air earlier in the day encouraging parents to keep their children home from school. Airport contacts report that all flights came in as scheduled and that the airport remains open.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Two members of the Embassy's contracted guard force were reportedly robbed while walking on the T2 road between Bambeto and the Embassy. They were stripped down to their underwear and robbed of everything they were carrying, including 180,000 GnF (\$37.50) and a cellular phone.

¶5. (SBU) At approximately 1700 yesterday, an Embassy staff member was attacked after leaving the Embassy, while walking towards Bambeto. One of the demonstrators reportedly stabbed him in the arm with a pair of scissors, and the employee returned to the Embassy for medical treatment.

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RENEWED DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE MORNING  
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¶6. (SBU) Protestors began mobilizing again on Tuesday morning, and police and gendarmes were out in full force. At 07:00, RSO staff reported seeing 40 police deployed to the Bambeto traffic circle and 20 police along the Rue de la Prinze leading to the Hamdallaye traffic circle. On his way into work, DATT saw approximately 75 gendarmes at Hamdallaye Circle patrolling towards Bambeto. He also saw a large police contingent along Rue de la Prinze, including members of the specialized MAMBA unit, who were clearing debris from the road and working their way towards Hamdallaye. A GSO staff member reported seeing a large group of armed police walking on the T2 road towards Bambeto.

¶7. (SBU) By 0800, Embassy employees could hear gunfire coming from the Bambeto traffic circle, which is located about a half a mile from the Embassy. ECON LES, who must walk through the circle to get to work, reported that one person had already been shot.

¶8. (SBU) DATT reported that at 0940, police and gendarmes in  
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Hamdallaye had started firing their weapons. There were unconfirmed reports of two dead and several injured. The youths had reportedly moved from the area and were heading down the road to the Touiyah market.

¶9. (SBU) As of noon on Tuesday, Embassy continued to receive reports of civil disturbances, road blockages, and sporadic gunfire from various parts of the city.

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SECURITY POSTURING  
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¶10. (SBU) The GoG beefed up security this morning around the national public broadcast station, Radio Television Guinean (RTG), which is located across the street from the Embassy. The guards were wearing helmets and carrying light weapons, actively dispersing youths who were congregating near the building.

¶11. (SBU) A convoy of 14 military trucks reportedly went into Camp Boiro (located in the downtown area) around 0900. The military continue to remain in the camps and have not attempted to intervene in the civil disturbances. The Minister of Defense has reportedly restricted travel of military personnel through Saturday. General Camara, the Chief of Defense, told DATT to assure the American Charge that the military will observe its constitutional role and let the police handle local security.

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RELATIVE QUIET IN THE INTERIOR  
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¶12. (SBU) Embassy contacts in cities throughout the country indicate that the civil unrest is currently limited to the capital. In Kindia (two hours away), a contact reported that the local population is unhappy with the new fuel price, but that they are not yet ready to demonstrate. A contact in Labe (six hours away) said that the city is calm, but that there is no fuel available locally. He noted that the population is "waiting for a signal from Conakry" before reacting.

Despite riots over the weekend, the Boke region remains calm.

However, a contact indicated that residents of Kola Boundji (a town between Kamsar and Boke) are threatening to block the roads and railroad if the GoG does not provide them with water and electricity. Contacts in N'Zerekore (Forest Region), Siguiri (Upper Guinea), and Koundara (on western border with Senegal) indicate that all is calm, but people are unhappy about fuel prices. Similar sentiments were reported from Kankan, which has also reportedly experienced a general slowdown in regular economic activities.

¶13. (SBU) Military contacts in the interior also reported that the situation is calm, but said that they have increased military patrols and canceled weekend leave. They told DATT that they have been instructed to use force if the civilian population begins to attack government buildings.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSE  
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¶14. (SBU) The Guinean Government has not coordinated a response to the security situation, essentially leaving the crisis to the Minister of Security, who was just appointed to his position a few weeks ago. The Chief of Defense told DATT that he had not received any instructions from the government, and that he had already visited the prime minister twice before 1000 this morning. A youth leader told DATT that he had met with the Director General of the Police yesterday evening to try and encourage mediation and restraint. The Police DG reportedly told contact that he had been instructed by the "highest authority" to maintain a police presence and ensure order.

¶15. (SBU) The leader of Haal Pular, an ethnically based organization closely tied to the Peuhls, told POL LES that he accompanied the Minister of Security this morning to meet with local elders and young protestors in Bambeto. They reportedly encouraged the elders and the youths to work together to resolve the situation and restore calm.  
(COMMENT. Many of the demonstrations are taking place in predominantly Peuhl neighborhoods, such as Bambeto and Hamdallaye. Haal Pular is closely linked to Prime Minister Souare, who is Peuhl. END COMMENT).

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INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY  
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¶16. (SBU) DATT met with representatives of the French, German, and Spanish embassies yesterday evening. They all expressed concern about the situation, agreeing that it was likely to escalate over the next few days. They noted that a number of youths had been severely beaten by the security forces and suggested that the protestors may be prompted to retaliate with more violence. The Spanish representative said that his embassy would be closed on Tuesday, although both the French and the Germans said that they planned to open as usual. Embassy was able to confirm that the Germans did open on Tuesday morning, but a German diplomat said that they are "nervous."

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CIVIL SOCIETY  
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¶17. (SBU) Diplomatic contacts suggested that union leaders may soon take an official position in this crisis. Embassy sources report that the labor unions have not yet been able to meet, but that they are scheduled to get together at noon today. Union leader Rabiadou Serah Diallo left for Geneva last night to attend an International Labor Conference.

¶18. (SBU) POL LES contacted several youth leaders who claim

that they and their organizations have nothing to do with the protestors in the streets. One prominent leader said that he would be joining the labor union meeting later today in order to encourage calm, and to establish a group of civil society leaders who can negotiate with the government on behalf of the population.

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COMMENT  
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¶19. (SBU) Available information suggests that the protests are currently more random and spontaneous in nature. Key Embassy contacts throughout civil society (including youth leaders), the military, opposition political parties, etcetera claim to be completely uninvolved. The unions tend to respect the letter of the law, providing a pre-notification of strike and then an actual notification of strike before taking action. Although various contacts have been advocating for change over the past several months, they tend to prefer to first organize a core group of committed supporters, articulate a clear agenda with specific objectives, and then move forward, usually within the confines of the law.

¶20. (SBU) The general lack of security in Conakry is emboldening criminal elements and making citizens uneasy. Markets are closed, traffic is blocked, and the city has essentially shut down. While the protests currently appear largely unstructured, the GoG's lack of a coordinated response could prompt other civil and/or military groups to take advantage of the civil disorder to advance their own agendas. As the demonstrations continue, the potential for violence increases.

¶21. (SBU) Embassy convened an EAC at 0830 (reported septel). Many locally engaged employees were unable to get to work this morning and the Embassy is operating with under a reduced staffing pattern. The EAC agreed to cancel the Embassy's election night celebration later this evening. END  
COMMENT.  
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